

TALKING SCHOOL FUNDING

Hello Heidi and Cindy Lee;

Here are some thoughts regarding the above referenced.

Early years of education tried to teach us how to problem solve. Identify the problem, the cause and the cure. Problem, cause, cure.

THE PROBLEM

Property taxes had gone up for many, in fact more than quadrupled in my case, in 12 years. People are leaving the state because of "out of control" property taxes. People are financially stressed because of property tax increases. Many homes are for sale because of property taxes. Property values are declining. Schools receiving money from the State, in many cases, are allowing ridiculously low numbers of students per class. In many cases 6 or 8 children per class. Receiving towns and lower income families are very happy with Act 68. There's no incentive in those towns to consolidate schools or try to reduce school costs. Property taxes are discouraging businesses from coming to Vermont. Vermont is experiencing below average population growth. School costs are high because there's little economy of scale. Small schools are unable to take full advantage of technology and many other cost-saving measures.

CAUSE

Act 68

CURE

Repeal Act 68. Time has proven it is a disaster. Return to each town paying for their school budget. In this way many towns will realize they can't afford to have only 6 or 8 children per class as well as too many teachers and principals. Reduce the number of school superintendents. Several years ago the Burlington Free Press stated a study had been conducted that suggested we had 3 times the number of school superintendents needed. Approximately 90 versus 30. The State Education Department should work diligently with towns to determine what schools should be consolidated, as well as due-diligence on the many other issues. The State should have a fund to help schools that really need help keeping in mind that in America some areas have better school systems than others. Some areas are wealthier than others or better managed. Need strong leadership from the State officials.

I know this is a very complicated issue but unless something is done, Vermont is going to be in real difficulty.

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